

A VAST ARMY OF GOD

Ezekiel 37:1-14
Key verse 37:10

"So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army."

Thanks be to the Lord, who in His wonderful grace has saved us from the useless and meaningless life in the captivity of sin and made us an incomparably blessed people. We are blessed because we have an incomparable God, because we have received the Word of Life through Bible study, because we have a holy mission as a royal priesthood, and we have spiritual victory. Let us remember the wonderful grace of God every day and live as God's holy people. Let us be confident and undaunted to challenge the work of spiritual revival in Europe by forming 10,000 one-to-one Bible study teams.

As the New Year begins, let us renew God's hope and vision in our hearts through Ezekiel 37. Our God is the Almighty God who brings even dead and withered bones back to life and sets them up as a great army of God. Actually, Israel had been a blessed people, but at the time of Ezekiel, through early morning prayer and see God's mighty work of revival, that Europe as a pastor nation is needed for world mission.

1. A field full of dry bones (1-3)

Ezekiel was a priest who was captured in the year 597 B.C. at the first conquest of Jerusalem and was led away to Babylon together with the entire Jewish upper class. There God called him as his prophet to preach the message of repentance and conversion below to the Jewish exiles. 11

they were in the most hopeless situation because they had fallen into Babylonian captivity for their sins. But God first planted his vision into the heart of Hezekiel and through him into his people his hope and vision of God that God would lead them out of their graves and renews them as God's people. Jerusalem was destroyed and it seemed as if they were to die and be forgotten in the distance. But God first planted in Ezekiel and him in his people the hope and vision of God that God would bring them out of their graves and make them alive as the people of God. Let us no longer look at the situation and conditions, but let us see our sheep and next generation with the eyes of God's hope that God has already brought them to life and set them up as a great army of God. With this vision of God we may prophesy the Word of God through the formation of 10,000 one-to-one Bible study, come to God

years later, he received news of the final destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the removal of all remaining inhabitants. Israel had effectively ceased to exist and the exiles lived in bitter defeat and hopelessness. However, God used Ezekiel to implant the faith in the sovereign rule of God and the hope for the restoration of the land of Israel in the hearts of his people.

In chapter 37, God gave Ezekiel a vision through which He wanted to teach him the

faith and implant in him the vision that Israel would be resurrected and made alive. Ezekiel was thereby led by the Spirit of the Lord into a wide field. Let us read verses 1 and 2: "The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry." The field, which Ezekiel saw in his vision, was covered with the withered bones of killed people. It was a picture of horror and death. There was utter hopelessness. One would prefer not to move at all in such a field. How could one even find hope in such a situation? People usually like to see fields of full grain or fruit, which are a sign of hope and the future and the care of God. But a field where there are only dead bones and no life left is depressing and makes us paralyzed and hopeless.

God led Ezekiel over this field. He was supposed to walk between the bones everywhere so that he could be sure that really everybody was dead. He should understand the fullness of the hopeless situation. The bones were so withered that they could not even be recognized as human beings.

But now Mr. Ezekiel asked a challenging question. Let us read verse 3: "He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know." God asked Ezekiel if he would believe that the bones would be brought back to life in view of the completely hopeless situation and the dead bones lying around everywhere. Humanly speaking, the answer could only be "no", because according to all available scientific knowledge it is impossible to bring a dead bone back to life. An emergency doctor may resuscitate a patient immediately after cardiac arrest, but when flesh and skin have already decomposed, no one can see any hope or future.

But Ezekiel did not fall into the hole of

disbelief and calculation. Instead, he answered by faith: "Sovereign Lord, you alone know." This means that he trusted in the Almighty God who can do something, even if it actually looks impossible. Even Ezekiel did not know how God could do this. But he believed that God in his omnipotence wanted and could do something for them.

We also experience the dead bones of the young people on campus and among our next generation. Young people are captivated by the materialistic way of thinking and striving for success and fun in the world, so that they ignore the spiritual world. There are many whose eyes are glued to the Internet and social media so that they can barely lift their heads up and look up at the sky. Even among Christians, we see quite a few who are only interested in themselves and their advantage, but run away quickly when they should give themselves a little for the work of God. God asks us, "Do you think these bones will come to life again?" Do you think that your children, your sheep will come back to life?

There is nothing we can do ourselves. We need the faith of Ezekiel that God knows and that he will do something great. In John 11 Jesus asked Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life. Do you believe that?" God wants us to have resurrection faith. God wants us not to sink into the grave of hopelessness, calculation and unbelief. God wants us to look to Him, the Almighty God. Then we can answer like Ezekiel: "Sovereign Lord, you alone know." Because our God is the almighty God, who even has power over death, we can confidently see the work of spiritual revival in our sheep and also in Germany and Europe: "Sovereign Lord, you alone know. You can resurrect young people. You can change Germany and Europe into a pastoral nation.

2. A vast army of God (4-14)

Let us read verse 4: "Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!' Now God challenged Ezekiel to speak to the dead bones: "You dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! It is not easy to speak to dry bones because they have no ears to hear. But God wanted Ezekiel himself to first establish faith in his heart and proclaim the Word of God through obedience of faith. He should also challenge the dry bones to hear the Word of God and to obey it. He should prophesy in all details what God would do for them, whether they understand it or not. Let us read verses 5 and 6: "This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.'" Indeed, God's Word brings the only hope to the dead bones. The Word of God revealed the power of God that was now at work in them. Let us look at verses 7 and 8. At first, Ezekiel heard only a low murmur. Then he noticed that the bones slowly started to move. Bit by bit the bones moved together, each bone moved back to its original place. It rushed and rattled everywhere. Then tendons grew, then flesh and finally they were covered with skin. It was the mighty work of the almighty creator God, who from nothing brought everything into existence.

God works where we preach the Word of God through obedience of faith. When Ezekiel preached God's Word through obedience, the incredible happened and the bones began to move and became real bodies again. God's Word Mark 8:29 changed a salesman, who thought only of light bulbs and washing machines, into a living being for God's mission and into an influential Bible teacher for the Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences. Genesis 6:5 changed a young man who was seeking worldly joy into a shepherd who loves God the most and serves the next generation with a sense of responsibility. We believe

that through our Bible studies God continues to bring dead bones to life and uses them as influential Bible teachers.

When we read verse 8, we realize that the restored bodies were still missing something crucial, namely the breath of God. Until now, they were just dead bodies, without the Spirit of God in them. That is why Ezekiel should now also prophesy to the breath that he should come and blow on them. Let us look at verse 9: "Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'" Ezekiel should pray with others. Prayer is the expression of faith. Prayer is the confession that I can do nothing, but that God can do everything.

God works through prayer, which we bring to him out of faith. Mark 11:24 says, "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." The fall of the Berlin Wall began with the prayers of some Christians in Leipzig's Nikolai Church. Their prayer looked so small and insignificant, but it grew into the famous Monday Demonstration that finally brought the system of the GDR to its knees. God also blesses the faithful early morning prayer of our co-workers and the next generation, which we bring to God by faith, and thereby works for the revival in Europe.

What happened when Ezekiel obeyed and prophesied by faith? Let us read verse 10 together: "So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army." When he obeyed, he experienced the mighty work of God. And also this time exactly what Ezekiel prophesied by faith happened. The breath now came into the dead bodies and they came to life again. The dead and flabby bodies became full of power, so that they could stand up. Now they were no longer helpless and powerless bones, but an

exceedingly great army of God, ready to take up the cause of God.

These verses teach us the work of the Spirit of God. A body without spirit is powerless and useless, but the spirit makes it alive and strong. When God created man, he was not called a living being until after God had blown the breath into him. In a similar way, we see many young people who should actually be strong and alive, but who are in fact powerless and live driven by the current spirit of the times and the opinions of others. Only the Spirit of God makes a person spiritually alive, more than that, it makes him a soldier of Christ who courageously stands up for the truth of God.

It is the wonderful work of God, who makes spiritually dead and hopeless people alive, even raising them up as a great army of God. We have seen the great and mighty work of God when a man of faith, M. Dr. Samuel Lee, prophesied the Word of God by faith. In the '60s and up to the '80s, nobody could believe that Korean students could serve world mission at all. They all thought that it would be enough if they took care of their own country which belonged to the 3rd world. But Dr. Samuel Lee told them based on Acts 1:8 that they would serve world mission. No one could believe in it, but when he challenged it by faith, the Spirit of God worked very powerfully and sent out students from Korea as missionaries. First there was a rush through Korean nurse-missionaries in Germany, then God sent student missionaries to Europe, to North America, later to the CIS. In this way God has spread the work of raising up disciples in over 100 countries and brought it to life.

It is also a great life-giving work of God that missionaries from Korea have established local leaders. Although he was smiled at at first, and later even hostile, M. Peter has served disoriented German students through faith, helping them to have faith in Jesus and grow as spiritual leaders. He prophesied to them by believing that God would use them as royal priesthood,

shepherds and spiritual leaders for this generation. Humanly speaking, it was incomprehensible and beyond our imagination. But God worked through this faith so that we could become spiritually alive, be used as servants of the Word of God, even as spiritual leaders. God will continue to bless his faith that both local shepherds and the next generation will be used spiritually alive as global leaders for the work of revival.

The GLE forum was such a work of prophesying the Word of God to the next generation, especially studying the 5 Books of Moses with them and God has begun to bring them to life. Not only did we hear a great roar, but we experienced that some came to God with sincere repentance, that they actively work as Bible teachers and grow as global spiritual leaders. We pray that God will abundantly bless the preparations for GLEF 2020, that our next generation of global spiritual leaders will be mobilized and preciously used by God.

In verses 11 to 14, God explains to Ezekiel what this vision meant for his people of Israel. Israel was then in the grave of hopelessness. Judah and Jerusalem had fallen and all the inhabitants had been taken to Baylon. The Northern Kingdom had already disappeared 140 years earlier and the inhabitants had been scattered all over the world. The Jews in Babylon felt as if they were living dead. Babylon seemed to be their grave, where they would eventually die and disappear forever. Moreover, this captivity was the result of their own sins and those of their ancestors who had abandoned God. But God spoke to them that He would take them out of their graves and bring them back to life. They were to be allowed to return to their land and they were to learn that God is the Lord.

Spiritually, Europe is like a field of the dead. The number of believers always seems to decline. False doctrines such as the theory of evolution or genderism are widely accepted as truth. But the real cause lies in

the Christians themselves. Bible criticism has challenged the very basis of faith. Many churches have neglected or even completely abandoned God's mission. Thus, many churches today suffer from aging. But God does not leave us in our graves, but wants to bring us back to life. He has started a work of revival through our UBF pioneers. They have challenged the mission of God among the students and raised disciples of Jesus as future leaders. God uses our one-to-one Bible study and our early morning prayer to make the students and the next generation spiritually alive and to raise them up as an exceedingly great army of God. We believe that God will spiritually resurrect Germany and Europe, raise the faith in the hearts of the young

people, even use them as a shepherd nation for world mission.

What should we do practically to make the students of the University of Bonn, Koblenz and Rhein-Sieg, Mainz, Aschaffenburg, Düsseldorf spiritually alive? Let us, like Ezekiel, speak the Word of God through the obedience of faith so that we can form 10,000 one-to-one Bible Study teams and raise the students spiritually revived as a great army of God. God will also raise up our next generation as an exceedingly great army of God.